

Literacy Based “Filler” Activities

These activities can be used to fill a few minutes for time in your day. Make adjustments as you see fit, change words or how games are played to meet the needs of the kids you work with.

- Read a book of poems out loud. Shel Silverstein’s books are great for this. Ask the students to choose a number, go to that page and read the poem on that page. As poems become more familiar, encourage the students to recite the poem along with you.
- Play a word building game. Start with a root word (ie car) and write it on the board. Then have students come up one at a time to erase 1-3 letters and/or add up to three letters. Divide the students in teams to make it more competitive. Provide clear examples the first few times you play car -> card -> carry -> merry ->berry. With younger students start with a word that has lots of rhyming words if they change the first letter (ie cat, met, dad)
- Have the students make up a song/rap in which every line or every other line rhymes. Consider rhyming about the activities going on around the students. At first it may help for an adult to get them started:
Here we are in line, waiting for some snack
If I don’t eat it all I’ll put it in my pack
Then I’ll take it home and put it in my tummy
And all I can say is that it is really yummy
- Give students examples of long words and ask them to count the number of letter then the number of sound and see if they are the same or different. With the word baseball, there are 8 letters but only 6 sounds because we don’t say the e sound or the second l sound. Other words might include cowboy (6 letters, 4 sounds), sheriff, hippopotamus, policeman, firefighter, library, yardstick, gymnasium.
- Use interesting vocabulary words in funny sentences have have kids guess what the words mean. Using the names of the kids in the sentences will add interest, just make sure they are being used in nice ways. This game would work as a whole group but competition can be added by playing kids against adults (if the kids guess the meaning in 3 guesses they get a point, if not the adult gets a point) or by playing in teams and the opportunity to guess goes back and forth between teams.
Bizarre: Ian made a face so bizarre that Beth fainted when she saw him.
Outlandish: Sophia had the most outlandish shoes on yesterday, they could light up and sing.
Aroma: Daniel’s head lifted and his nose drew him like a magnet to the room with the fabulous aroma.
Other words to consider: Odoriferous, Alumni, Monarch, Bellowed, Indignant, Nuzzle,

Superb, Mediocre, Radical, Rambunctious, Exasperate, Dilapidated, Trickle

*The more you use the words the better. They are more likely to stick if they are repeated several times.

- Silly Sentences: Have the students come up with a silly sentence in which all or most of the words start with the same letter. Make it a competition by seeing who can come up with the longest sentence. You can see how many different sentences you can come up with for the same letter or choose a different letter each turn. This can also take be a competition between the adults and kids. The adults say a four word sentence then the kids say a five word sentence and so on. Provide clear examples the first few times you play:
Silly snakes slithered south.
Tony the Tiger tackled their ticking timer.
Many monkeys moved.
- Charades: Write down words or phrases on index cards or pieces of paper. Have kids come up one at a time, chose a card, read it, then act it out for the group while the group tries to guess what they are acting out. This requires them to understand what they read and think of multiple ways to express it without using words.